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WINTER 2009-2010

1. THE FIRST WORD: The purpose of the quarterly Newsletter is to help keep you up to date by providing information on issues and concerns important to you as a military retired member, spouse or survivor. The decision as to what information will be included in each issue is based on information received from many authoritative sources,. This includes updates from government agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); TRICARE; social security; Air Force Retiree News Service; other government agencies and publications; organizational updates and other sources. Primarily however, many of the articles are developed in response to the questions or problems brought to the attention of the Retiree Activities Office (RAO) on a daily basis. When we receive many calls about a specific topic, it indicates there is a need to try and clarify certain benefits such as TRICARE For Life, Medicare or the Survivor Benefit Plan. Consequently, some of the information may seem repetitive but it is included again in an effort to further explain an important issue when questions still persist.

We often get requests to encourage membership in a specific organization, or to support a particular cause. Since this publication is supported with appropriated funds there are restrictions concerning content. We have been criticized for not promoting a specific worthwhile cause, however Section 1913 of 18 U.S. Code, known as the “lobbying act”, strictly prohibits grass roots efforts of this kind to influence the legislative process through the medium of appropriated fund publications. Our job is to inform our readers which may include information on pending legislation but not to take a position no matter our personal feelings. What the reader chooses to do with the information we provide is up to him/her. While we cannot promote membership in any one organization, we **DO** encourage retirees to belong to a military organization among the many that represent the military community. These private groups are allowed to lobby on behalf of their membership and are important sources of information pertaining to the military. Most of them have formed a Military Coalition which combines the power of millions of members behind a concentrated lobbying effort. These efforts have been instrumental in improving benefits for both the active duty and retired community.

We appreciate comments regarding the Newsletter. Most important we appreciate the support from the Wing Commander and his staff without which the Newsletter would cease to exist.

2. COMING EVENTS: It is not too early to mark your calendars for our annual highlight.

30th ANNUAL MILITARY RETIREE DAY
SATURDAY, 24 APRIL 2010 MINUTEMAN CLUB, 1000 HOURS
INFORMATION, GOOD FOOD AND FRIENDSHIPS, OLD AND NEW

The Planning Committee is hard at work to guarantee an enjoyable and informative time for all. To facilitate parking for the attendees, we will continue to have all events take place in the Minuteman Club. Festivities will begin at **1000** with Information Services in the Minuteman Club, followed by the Opening Ceremonies, Luncheon (by reservation) and Guest Speaker in the Ballroom. We anticipate Information

Services will consist of about 30 on and off base exhibitors to dispense information and to give you an opportunity to consult personally with a representative of TRICARE, Social Security, Veterans Administration, 66th Medical Group, Services and many others. **We are fortunate to have Colonel David L. Orr, Commander, 66th Air Base Wing as our Guest Speaker following the Luncheon.** More information and a luncheon reservation form will be in the Spring Newsletter.

3. **OUTREACH PROGRAM:** We repeat this every issue for the benefit of our new readers. This special program offers assistance to any active duty or retired military member, their survivors and family members who have questions, or problems related to health care, or support services. Instead of trying to deal with endless telephone menus while navigating the complexities of today's "information age" or dealing with unresponsive or hard to reach agencies or individuals through 800 numbers which often leads to misinformation, confusion and frustration, give us a call. If you are experiencing difficulty, or have a question regarding Medicare, TRICARE For Life or Pharmacy, TRICARE supplemental insurance, VA benefits, Survivor Benefit Plan, divorce, death, disability or any other adversity, call Captain Love at (781) 377-2476. **If she is not in, the Duty Officer will contact her for you. If you have not heard back by the end of the next duty day, PLEASE call back as the message may have been unclear or we could not reach you. If you get the audex during duty hours, the line is busy so please leave a message. We will return your call as soon as the phone is free. All military retiree, spouse or survivor deaths in New England may also be reported to Captain Love by calling (781) 377-2476 who will assist with notifications and processing for benefits.**

We were unsuccessful in returning several calls recently because the numbers were not clear on the voice mail or the caller could not be reached. Since most people do not identify themselves on their answering machine, it is impossible to know if we have the right number when leaving a message. We take pride in being sure everyone who contacts the RAO receives a call back. However, when the number is wrong and the caller is not on our mailing list, there is nothing we can do to reach you. **PLEASE** call back if you have not heard back from us by the end of the next duty day.

4. **HEALTH CARE NOTES:** This section focuses on health care issues.

HANSCOM CLINIC - Many of you who have visited the pharmacy recently may have seen the sign in the lobby relative to the "Yellow Card Program". The Department of Defense has mandated that Military Treatment Facilities (MTF) be reimbursed for services rendered to non-active duty patients by any other health insurance (OHI) the individual may have. Consequently, every one who uses the clinic must provide information regarding any **other health insurance (OHI)** he/she may have so the OHI may be billed for services received at the MTF. The money received will be used to help support the many services offered. **Even if you do not have any OHI, all clinic patients including pharmacy customers must obtain the Yellow Card as soon as possible. Fill out a DD Form 2569, which may be obtained at the pharmacy, information desk or elsewhere in the clinic and submit it. The Yellow Card you will receive must be presented every time you use the clinic including pharmacy and must be renewed each year, or sooner if your personal or insurance information changes. Even if you do not have OHI, such as Medicare beneficiaries using TRICARE For Life (TFL), you must fill out the form anyway. Please note - The patient will not be billed for any services.** The obligation to pay applies to the insurance company only, including any insurance co-payments or deductibles. For questions, call the Third Party Collection (TCP) representative, Sharon Chaires at (781) 377-3351.

PHARMACY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED – We have just been notified that due to a shortage of pharmacy personnel, civilian prescriptions may not be dropped off at the pharmacy between the hours of 1100-1300, Mon-Fri until further notice. Volunteers would help alleviate the problem and are essential to helping the pharmacy staff serve the many beneficiaries with a minimum of waiting time.

Learn about medication and serve as a Patient Safety Monitor. Retirees, spouses or survivors interested in helping in the pharmacy can contact TSGT Young by e-mail tamika.young@hanscom.af.mil, calling 781 377-1522, option #6 or inquiring at the pharmacy. You can make a difference and help both the active duty and retired communities.

UNIFORMED SERVICES FAMILY HEALTH PLAN (USFHP) AT BRIGHTON MARINE –

There appears to be some confusion among USFHP members about how Tufts relates to the Plan. Some have expressed the belief that Tufts determines benefits and coverage which is not the case. To help USFHP members understand what role Tufts does have, we offer the following explanation. **The USFHP is not a Tufts product or commercial health plan.** Rather, USFHP has partnered with Tufts Health Plan **to help administer** the program. On behalf of the USFHP, Tufts handles many of the administrative functions such as claims processing and data reporting requirements and credentials the plan's provider network which insures that the highest quality standards are met. In addition, this partnership allows USFHP members access to a number of value added benefits such as discounts of fitness center memberships, chiropractic care and disease management programs.

The USFHP is a TRICARE program, created by Congress and funded by the Department of Defense, and is exclusively for TRICARE eligible beneficiaries in the each of the six Plan's service area. Although a TRICARE program, offering the TRICARE Prime benefit and fee structure, the six Plans available in continental US, are separate contracts and unlike Prime allows Medicare eligible beneficiaries to participate. For more information on the USFHP at Brighton Marine, call 1-800-818-8589, or go to www.usfamilyhealth.org. For Information on all USFHPs, go to www.usfhp.org.

TRICARE PHARMACY - The TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) is introducing significant enhancements to beneficiaries as it combines its mail order and retail pharmacy contracts into one called **TRICARE Pharmacy with a single phone number for both 1-877-363-1303** through Express Scripts. The improvements include the Specialty Medication Care Management in the mail order pharmacy to help beneficiaries improve their health through continuous evaluation, ongoing assessment of education needs and management of medication use. Also, expansion of the Member Choice Center provides assistance to help beneficiaries switch their military treatment facility prescriptions to mail-order. For more information visit www.tricare.mil/pharmacy or www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE or call 1-877-363-1303.

TRICARE H1N1 IMMUNIZATION POLICY – TRICARE Prime, Standard and Extra beneficiaries can get their shots from network and non-network providers without paying a deductible or making a co-payment. A temporary waiver allows retired TRICARE Prime enrollees to get the H1N1 immunization from non-network providers without a referral or authorization, eliminating point-of-service charges.

TRICARE-For Life (TFL) beneficiaries must follow Medicare rules regarding H1N1 vaccine.

Medicare will pay for administering the vaccine but not the vaccine itself if it is supplied by suppliers free of charge. Payment rules will be the same as those applied to influenza vaccine. The vaccine for seasonal flu is not expected to protect against the H1N1 although both vaccines can be administered the same day. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) advises that everyone get the H1N1 vaccine but it is more vital for certain groups such as pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months, healthcare and emergency workers, all between the ages of 6 months and 24 years, people age 25-64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune system and older people with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma or HIV.

TRICARE CONTRACTOR – In the last issue we announced that Aetna would replace Health Net Federal Services (HNFS) as the contractor for the north region. Health Net has successfully challenged

the contract award and consequently the process must be reviewed. It will be some time before the outcome will be known. In the meantime, Health Net will continue to be the TRICARE contractor for some months in the North region.

5. DEFENSE ELIGIBILITY ENROLLMENT RECORD SYSTEM (DEERS): The DEERS web site has a new name. It is now called “DS Logon”. The Department of Defense (DoD) Self-Service Logon is a secure credential issued to uniformed service members, spouses and other family members age 18 and older who are eligible for benefits in the DEERS system and allows access to secure DoD web applications such as pay and DEERS. To create a DS Logon, retiree sponsors may use their MyPay pin or use a Common Access Card(CAC) if they have one, in the DS Logon Access Manager at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/index.jsp>. Sponsors may request a DS Logon for themselves or a family member. A personal identification number (PIN) will be mailed along with instructions on how to activate the DS Logon. For more information about requesting a DS Logon, visit <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dsaccess/pub/FAQ.do>.

Keeping the DEERS record up to date is a very important responsibility of retired members. Any change in family status must be reported. Failure to renew family member ID cards before expiration will result in a loss of privileges including health care. We have many people traveling to Hanscom who may have an ID card issuing facility nearer to their home. To find the nearest facility, go to <http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl/owa/home>. For those without Internet access call the RAO at 781-377-2476. To renew a dependent ID card, the individual must have two forms of identification including the expiring ID card and another form of identification. If the ID card has been lost another picture ID such as a driver’s license must be presented.

You can **change your address** with DEERS as follows.

Nearest ID card issuing facility. At Hanscom, Customer Service in Bldg 1305.

On-line at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/index.jsp> (must have DFAS PIN or Common Access Card (CAC))

Call Defense Manpower Data Center at 1-800-538-9552 (1-866-363-2883 TTY/TDD)

Fax changes to 1-831-655-8317

Mail changes to: DMDC Support Office, 400 Gigling Rd, Seaside CA 93955-6771

For recording changes in family status, certain documents may be required such as a death, marriage or birth certificate or divorce decree and require a visit to an ID card issuing facility.

6. DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE (DFAS): In the near future, DFAS will implement new myPay access requirements to increase the security of user information which will require users to establish a new user name (log in ID) and password. When logging into myPay the first time following implementation of the new security enhancements, you will be allowed to use your existing log in ID and PIN and will be prompted to change login credentials. New **login IDs** will require 6-129 alphanumeric characters that will be unique to one user. Help screens will contain the ID requirements. You must then establish a **password** to accompany your customized login ID. Passwords must be no less than 8 or more than 15 characters. Your social security number and myPay PIN may still be used on the telephone if using the voice response system. The best security is to be sure your passwords and user IDs are kept private and secure. Keeping them locked up is suggested. It is also suggested they should be **memorized** and any written record be destroyed. Since everywhere one goes on the web requires a user ID and password, someone has to be kidding! Call 1-888-332-7411 for questions.

7. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA): Important news from the VA.

AGENT ORANGE BENEFITS EXTENDED – Based on an independent study by the Institute of Medicine, service-connection as been established for three additional illnesses presumed to be associated

with the herbicide known as Agent Orange used in Vietnam to defoliate trees and remove concealment from the enemy. The conditions are B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia; Parkinson's Disease; and ischemic heart disease which have been recently added to the list bringing the total to 15 presumed illnesses recognized by the VA as being associated with exposure to Agent Orange. In practical terms, veterans who served in Vietnam during the war and who have a "presumed" illness do not have to prove an association between their illness and military service which simplifies and speeds up the application for benefits. Vietnam veterans who served "in country" and have been diagnosed with any of the three conditions, or survivors whose spouse died of one should contact their Veteran's Agent(MA), a National Service Officer with a military organization such as the Disabled American Veterans, American Legion etc., or the VA directly for assistance with filing a claim. For more information about Agent Orange and VA's services and programs for those exposed to the chemical, call 1-800-827-1000 or go to, <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange>. Once a veteran who is also retired military receives service-connected disability compensation from the VA, an application for Combat Related Special Compensation (CRSC) which restores the VA compensation offset to military retired pay may be applied for. For information on CRSC, go to www.crsc.army.mil.

WARNING OF SCAM – We could fill pages with warnings about scams which abound and get more sophisticated all the time. However, the VA has put out a warning concerning a group calling itself "Patient Care Group" which alleges it is helping the VA administer its prescription program. They claim the VA's billing procedures have changed and therefore they need credit card numbers in advance of filling the prescription. Neither the VA nor any other reputable agency will request personal financial information over the phone. Sad as it may seem, the best advice is to suspect any caller you do not know who is requesting personal information and hang up. Veterans with questions about VA services can call 1-877-222-8387 or go to www.va.gov.

8. SPACE A TRAVEL: To enlarge upon the article in the last issue we have added some information which may be helpful. Space A Travel is a much appreciated benefit for military retirees. The Air Force Mobility Command (AMC) has the latest Space A travel information including an updated AMC passenger terminal contact list (complete with phone, e-mail and Web links), travel documents, sample letters and brochures. A spokesman for AMC emphasized that although AMC wants to facilitate the passengers trip, it does not guarantee travel and passengers need to be prepared for their Space A trip to take more time than if traveling by commercial air. Retirees travel as Category VI passengers. Since missions can be rerouted, delayed or cancelled for a variety of reasons such as weather, maintenance issues or higher priority missions – retirees need to be flexible and plan for any potential delays and added expenses including money for a commercial plane ticket if necessary and be mentally prepared for disappointment when plans don't come together. A person may sign up for Space A travel four ways by going to the passenger terminal or remotely by telephone, fax or e-mail. Sponsors must provide their name and information on traveling dependents, and their desired destination. The web site is www.amc.af.mil/amctravel. Another site with good information is www.pepperd.com. Those without access to the Internet can purchase an excellent guide with all the information. It is a "Military Space-A Travel Guide" from Military Living Publications, PO Box 2347, Falls Church VA 22042-0347 for \$33.55, or it may be available at the Base Exchange.

9. 66th FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRON (formerly Services/MWR): Recreation available at Hanscom. **HANSCOM INN – 781-377-2112** Retirees are eligible to use billeting on a Space A basis. Reservations are now being accepted for Space A or leisure travelers at the Hanscom Inn for up to 10 days at one time based on availability. Rates are \$39.00 for a single room and a family room in the Temporary Lodging Facility at \$41.50/night. Call 781 377-2112, ext.0 for a reservation.

INFORMATION, TICKETS AND TOURS (ITT), 781-377-3262 -

Many discount movie and special events tickets are available. If you are planning a trip to Disneyworld, or the Orlando FL theme parks, be sure to check to see what is available. We usually list some trips here but they are for December and there is no guarantee you will receive this Newsletter in time. Our suggestion is to visit the web site www.hanscomservices.com which has up to date information, For those without online access, stop by ITT if on base or call the above number.

MINUTEMAN CLUB – 781-377-3799 Retirees are encouraged to join the Club and take advantage of the discounts available to members at all FSS activities on base. The dues are as follows: O-1 \$12, O-2 \$14, O-3 \$16 and O-4 through O-6 \$20. Enlisted dues are E-1 through E-4 \$2, E-5 \$5, E-6 \$8, and E-7 through E-9 \$12. Officer retirees over age 62 are \$9 and enlisted \$5. Retirees living more than 50 miles from the base pay ½ the dues for their pay grade.

Some special events are as follows:

STEAK NIGHT every Tuesday from 1700-2000. Entrees include the buffet bar featuring salad, rice and/or potatoes, vegetable du jour, fresh rolls and dessert.

BINGO returns to the Club on Wednesday, 127 January 2010, Cards go on sale at 1800 and the games start at 1830. Packages are \$20 for Club members and \$25 for non-members: includes 8 regular games of a \$40 payout per game. Specials and coverall are extra. A minimum of 20 players is required.

LUNCH – A hot lunch buffet is offered Tuesday-Friday from 1100-1330. Daily themes: Tuesday is Southern Sensations, Wednesday – A Taste of Italy, Thursday- Worldwide Fare and Friday – New England Originals. Plus enjoy specialty sandwiches, wraps, classic burgers, sides, soups and the enhanced salad bar.

DINNER – a varied dinner menu is offered Wed through Fri from 1700-2100 and **Sunday 1600-1900**

Limited space precludes our listing of the many opportunities for recreation and dining on base. However, one can get all the information at www.hanscomservices.com. Check it out

10. ANGELS FOR THE ARMED FORCES: ANGEL FLIGHT FOR NEW ENGLAND is a non-profit organization providing free air transportation in private aircraft by volunteer pilots so military personnel and veterans who need access to medical care, and for family members who need to accompany them. Active duty military and family members are pretty well cared for by the individual service Aid Societies, the Wounded Warrior Program and the Medical Air Evacuation system, all of which coordinate orders for travel in case of a service member's injury. Retirees may be assisted by the Services Aid Societies but there may be cases where eligibility criteria are not met and this program may be of value. Certainly, older veterans who are in need of transportation for medical care and don't come under the many programs available to injured veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan could benefit. For more information call 1-800-549-9980, or go to www.angelflightne.org.

11. WORLD WAR II VETERANS: A non-profit organization named **HONOR FLIGHT NEW ENGLAND** will fly WWII veterans to Washington DC to view the memorials erected there in their honor. They are currently booking for Spring 2010. For more information, contact the founder Joe Byron at Honor Flight New England PO Box 16287, Hooksett NH 03106, (603) 518-5368, by e-mail to honorflightnewengland@gmail.com, or on the web at www.honorflightnewengland.org.

12. BE INFORMED: The misinformation on the Internet travels with the click of a mouse and gets around the globe in seconds. The most shameful episode of misinformation that caused alarm in many was an e-mail which had not one life but three over a period of nine months. It alleged that "TRICARE For Life Was on the Chopping Block". The author took an item in the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report to Congress (which is submitted every year with suggestions for cutting federal spending) he completely blew it out of proportion and gave it legitimacy it did not have by alleging it was

“legislation”. The CBO does not write legislation, it was not a “proposal. a “bill” or anything but a suggestion which was but one in a list of suggested changes to military health care which included having the active duty pay for their own care by giving them \$500/month. None of these suggestions ever saw the light of day in Congress. Presently, there are no proposed changes to military and VA health care including TRICARE.

If you question the validity of an e-mail, check it out at www.snopes.com/ or www.truthorfiction.com.

12. RETIREE ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO): The Personal Affairs Record to help you organize your affairs for your spouse or next of kin is now available on our web site at www.hanscom.af.mil/rao.

13. AN AFTERTHOUGHT: A military retiree in his early 50s started a second career. His couldn't seem to get to work on time and every day he was 10 or 15 minutes late but was a good worker and valued employee. His boss was in a quandary about how to deal with it but called him in one day for a talk. He said, “You do a bang up job and we are happy to have you but you come in late every day. I know you retired from the Air Force. What did they say when you came in late?” He answered “Good morning, General”.

In the first year of marriage, the man speaks and the woman listens. In the second year, the woman speaks and the man listens. In the third year they both speak and the neighbors listen.

Arline F. Love
Captain, USAF, Retired
Director